

June 3, 1968

Dr. Charles B. Wilkinson  
Department of Psychiatry  
Kansas City Division, School of Medicine  
University of Missouri  
600 East 22nd Street  
Kansas City, Missouri 64108

Dear Dr. Wilkinson:

I hope you will forgive me for communicating a comment based on your grant application. It has to do with the sociological significance of looting. I had already put together a few paragraphs intended for a column, which may or may not come to be completed, when I saw an account in a recent issue of Trans-Action which purports to give a completely different significance to the looting phenomenon. If you have a chance to see this before we meet shortly, I would be interested in your views in the matter.

Your application comments that the "intensification" hypothesis was not taken up by the Kerner report. Far from it, I have the impression that the great majority of the participants in, for example, Watts had been shown to be quite typical of the entire community, which would appear to be in direct contradiction to your present proposal. Are those data simply wrong, or can they be reconcilable with findings that you might adduce in support of "intensification"?

Let me say before you do that I hardly regard myself as an expert on any of these matters. On the contrary, I am fascinated by the possibility of applying scientific methodology to answering such difficult kinds of questions, and would be grateful for illumination wherever I can find it.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg  
Professor of Genetics

WILKINSON